

In her day, our great-grandmother spun the wool, dyed it and wove it into a handsome blue and cream coverlet that we treasured. It inspired us to try carding some of the fleece to free it of dirt then spin it into yarn. We barely made enough for a doll's small coverlet, the size of our potholder loom. We surely marveled at the persistence and industriousness of our ancestors.

Sheep are symbols of peace that have brought pleasure to many generations of farmers and shepherds. They will continue to impart a sense of harmony to our landscape for many more generations.

## **GRANDMA MARSHALL AND HER WICKER SEWING BASKET**

Grandma Marshall's wicker sewing basket rested on the end table next to her rocking chair. It was decorated with Chinese coins tied onto tassels. The round coins were etched with enchanting script encircling square holes in their centers. Her son, Arthur Bailey, brought this back to her from his years in Siam. My sisters and I were captivated with the tools inside the basket that Grandma used to create fancy work.

There were various sized crochet hooks, embroidery floss and embroidery hoops, scissors, thimbles, tape measure, beeswax, and a darning egg. Not to forget the puffy pin cushion we loved, with its small Chinese doll head in the center. Several celluloid hair pins also lay nestled in the basket, ready to secure the neat puffy bun that graced the top of Grandma's head.



**Grandma  
Crocheting**

Watching Grandma twine the crochet thread around her finger, then hook it into loops and chains with her crochet hook seemed miraculous. Wispy thread became dainty scallops for linen handkerchiefs or collar edgings. Sturdier thread became edging for her colorful embroidered pillow cases, giving them a stylish look.

She crocheted antimacassar sets that protected sofas and armchairs from getting soiled. Lacy doilies and dresser scarves took shape as her fingers nimbly crocheted. We liked to thread ribbons through the bookmarks she crocheted in the shape of a cross; these were given as tokens of friendship to be used as markers in her friends' Bibles.



Christmas was a very special time, and Grandma was busy all year preparing gifts, especially for her grandchildren. One year she surprised us with furnishings for a doll house. Empty thread spools became tables with lacy doilies atop them. Small boxes had been transformed into beds, couches, and chairs. Knitted blankets and cushions gave a look of elegance. We spent many happy hours playing with these.

Grandma gave us large crochet hooks and sturdy yarn to practice crocheting. She spent a lot of time teaching us the proper way to hold the hook and thread, and patiently untangled our clumsy attempts until we finally caught on. Bless her loving patience!



**Cousins at Grandma Marshalls**

Some days we tried to knit with sharp-pointed knitting needles that seemed to drop stitches at will. She encouraged us to make small squares of different colored yarn, then join them into a doll blanket. This caused us to feel that we had done something grand, since much of our practice work was left unfinished.

Wearing a thimble seemed awkward at first, but it was better than pricking our fingers. Grandma told us the story of her favorite thimble. It was a gift given to her by her niece, Marian Cartland, when she returned from a visit to the Holy Land. It was nestled in a carved olive-wood holder shaped like an acorn and protected by a velvet pouch; a treasure I have today. This connection to the Holy Land enriched the many Bible stories that Grandma shared with us while we toiled away at our needlework.



On another day Grandma had tea towels for us to embroider. From her sewing basket she brought forth special tools to use. We were fascinated with her small bird-shaped scissors that bit off our threads. We loved to open and close the ‘beak’ each time we snipped a thread.

To embroider a tea towel, which was formerly a sugar sack, we first traced a design in one corner of the towel, then separated the embroidery hoop. We placed one hoop on the underside of the towel with the matching hoop on top. We then pressed them together, creating a taut fabric surface to embroider. Threading the needle and following her instructions challenged us, but we did a passable job. We learned to embroider several stitches, such as straight stitch, outline stitch, satin stitch and our favorite, the lazy daisy stitch. Daisy petals were made by forming a loop of thread and anchoring the top of the loop with a stitch, then bringing the needle back to the flower’s center. For many years drying dishes with those tea towels brought us fond memories of stitching our crazy-looking daisies.

Grandma kept her eyes on our progress and often took out the darning egg. This was an egg-shaped wooden tool that helped keep a holey sock’s shape that made it easier to repair. She popped it into a stocking, centered it under a hole, and proceeded to mend it until it was wearable.

Grandma trusted us to always return the threads, needles and scissors to that wonderful sewing basket. It was then that she lifted out the ever-present bag of peppermints. We anticipated those flat, round ones all through the sewing session. Now, seventy-five years later, peppermints still conjure up those visits with Grandma.

We thank you, Grandma, for instilling a love of handwork and the art of creating lovely things.



Alice, Dorothy, Margaret, Grandma Marshall, and John